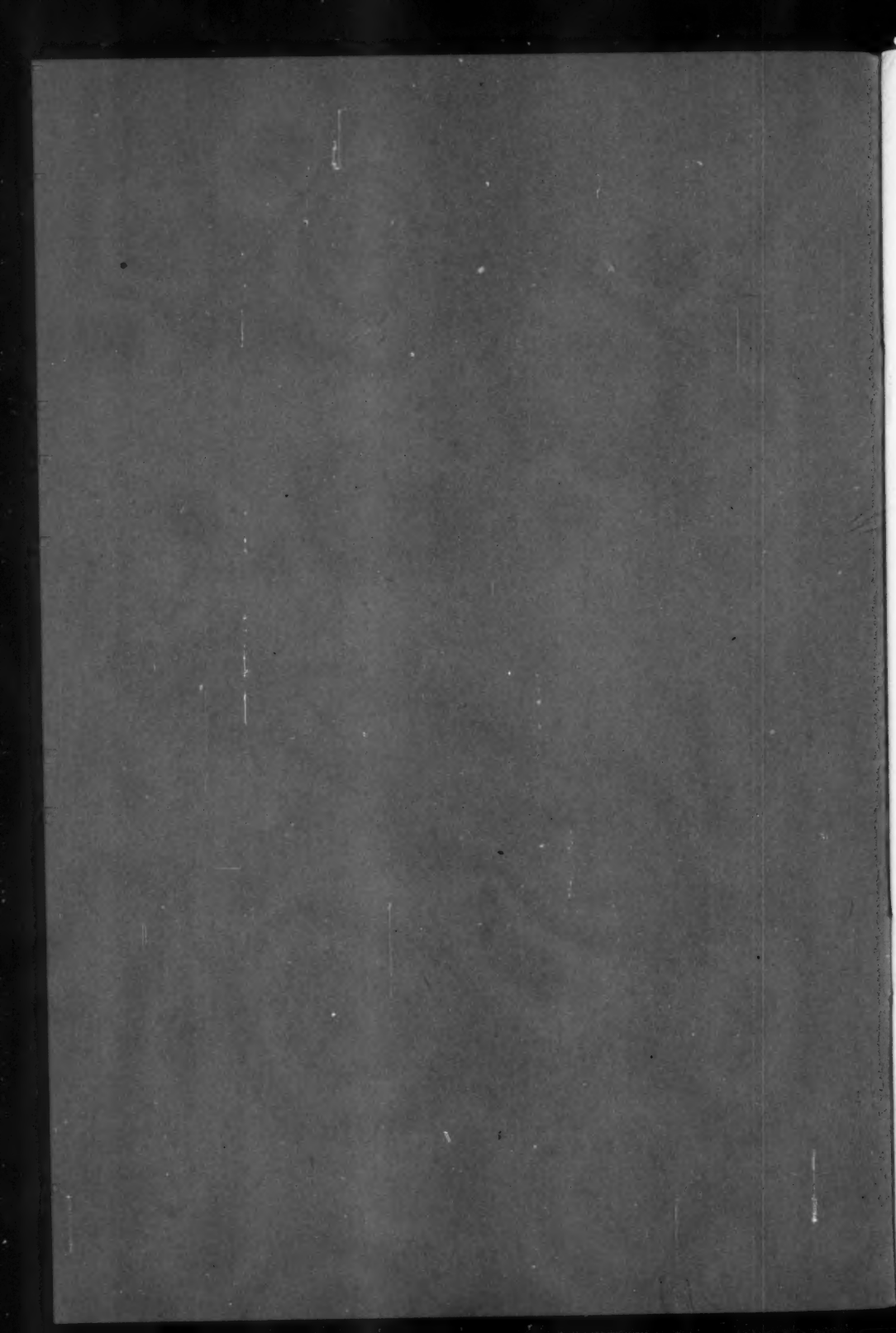


# PRIMITIVE MAN

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# PRIMITIVE MAN

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## THE CONCEPT OF MANA

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### I. METHOD OF APPROACH

**M**ANA has been for some time past a subject of much controversy among anthropologists. The study,<sup>1</sup> of which this article is a summary, was made by the present writer, to answer two questions: What is the mana-concept?, and, What are the "true" mana-concepts?

The method used was empirical. The field was surveyed and twenty-six alleged mana-concepts were selected for examination. The mana of the Melanesians was first analyzed in order to discover its characteristics. Then the remaining twenty-five concepts were examined to discover if they also possessed these characteristics. In the course of this comparative study, certain characteristics which Melanesian mana does not possess came to light. The results were then tabulated, and from this table a set of empirical standards was set up by which the "true" mana-concept could be recognized. This final grouping of the characteristics into primary, secondary, and marginal formed an "ideal" or "type" mana-concept which is found in its entirety in no one culture. The final step in the study was to judge each of the mana-concepts on the

<sup>1</sup> The concept of mana, MA dissertation, Catholic University of America, Wash., D. C., pp. 117.

basis of the "ideal" mana-concept, and to retain or eliminate each concept according as it did or did not measure up to the standard.

## II. CONCEPTS CONSIDERED

The Melanesian word mana can be rendered as "supernatural power". A composite definition made up from Codrington would run about as follows: "Mana is an impersonal, supernatural power which operates for good and evil, and can be possessed by all; it is all-pervading, is found in persons, animals or things, and is transferable; when it fails, the reason given is the intervention of a more powerful spirit".

By degrees, writers came to apply the term mana to the manifestation of similar supernatural powers among other tribes. The writer selected twenty-five of these assumed mana-concepts for analysis. A list of these concepts, with the tribes, including geographical location, among whom they are found, follows:

North America. (13). Hâi, Zuñi; manito, Algonkian; maxpé, Crow; nahúrac (power), Pawnee; nawalak, Kwakiutl; orenda, Iroquois; sulia, Salish; stlaw-la-kum, Flatheads; wakonda, Omaha; yêk, Tlingit; ?, Hudson Bay Eskimo; ?, Takelma; ?, "Siwash".

Africa. (6). L'-âr, Moroccans; lunyênsu, Bantu; mulungu, Yao; njomm, Ekoi; oudah, Pigmy; hasina, Malagasies.

Asia. (3). Tinh, Annamites; tsing, Chinese; Vedic concept, ancient Hindu.

Australia. (2). Arungquiltha, Arunta; manngur's power, Kabi.

Sumatra. (1). Tondi, Batak.

Melanesia. (1). Mana, Melanesians.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> For date on hâi (Zuñi), see J. E. Carpenter, *Comparative religion*, N. Y., 1913, 83; manito (Algonkian), W. Jones, in JAFL, 1905, 18:183-90; maxpé (Crow), R. H. Lowie, *Religion of Crow Indians*, AMNH-AP, 1922, 25:315-18, and *Primitive religion*, N. Y., 1924, 15; nahúrac (Pawnee), G. B. Grinnell, in JAFL, 1893, 6:115-18; nawalak, F. Boas, in USNM-R, 1895, 393-90, and in BAE-R, 1913-14, 35:1294, 1416; orenda (Iroquois), J. N. B. Hewitt, in AA, 1902, n. s. 4: 33-46, and s. v. in BAE-B, 30, pt. 2; sulia, C. Hill-Tout, *British North America*, pt. i, 1907, 166-75 *passim*; stlaw-la-kum (Flatheads), T. Crosby, *Among the An-ko-me-nums (Flatheads) of the Pacific Coast*, Toronto, 1907, 111-12, 119; wakonda (Siouan) A. C. Fletcher, s. v. in BAE-B, 30, pt. 2, and in BAE-R, 1905, 27:597-601, J. O. Dorsey, in BAE-R, 1889, 11:433 and *passim*, F. LaFlesche, in JAFL, 1905, 18:271-72, W. J. McGee, in BAE-R, 1893-94, 15:182-83, S. R. Riggs, *Dakota grammar*, CNAE, 1893, 9:214-16, P. Radin, in JAFL, 1914, 27:344-51; yêk (Tlingit), J. R.

It seemed advisable to eliminate from the start three of the above twenty-six concepts,—tsing, tinh, and hâi,—because their chief characteristic seemed to be “life-giving”. By “life” is here meant that which corresponds to the Latin “anima”, the “soul” or the principle of existence. If these three concepts have for their main function the giving of life, we seem obliged to conclude that they differ radically from the mana-concept. The latter is generally recognized to be a power, supernatural and impersonal, working for good or evil. It is not a “soul” or “anima”. It does not “give life” in this sense, although it may function to preserve life or to hasten death. For this reason then, tsing, tinh, and hâi were eliminated. Wakonda of the Omaha, which is described as a “life-giving” power by Fletcher,<sup>3</sup> was retained because of the peculiar significance given by the Omaha to the term “life-giving”, viz., “imparting motion or movement”.

### III. ANALYSIS OF THE CHARACTERISTICS

a. *Characteristics of Melanesian Mana.* The characteristics of Melanesian mana were now analyzed from Codrington's *Melanesians*. It was not assumed at the outset that Melanesian mana was a “true” mana-concept; its characteristics were selected

Swanton, in BAE-R, 1904-5, 26: 451-52; Hudson Bay Eskimo, L. M. Turner, in BAE-R, 1889-90, 11:193-202 and *passim*; Takelma, E. Sapir, in JAFL, 1907, 20:33-49 *passim*; “Siwash”, J. A. Costello, *The Siwash*, Seattle, 1895, 46.

L-'är, E. Westermarck, 'L-'ar', in *Anthrop. essays presented to E. B. Tylor*, London, 1907, and R. R. Marett, 'Mana', in ERE; lunyënsu (Bantu), E. Pechuël-Loesche, *Volkskunde von Loango*, Stuttgart, 1907, 276 and *passim*; mulungu (Yao), A. Hetherwick, in JAI, 1902, 32:93-95; njomm (Ekoi), P. A. Talbot, *In the shadow of the bush*, London, 1912, 108-9 and *passim*, and R. H. Lowie, *Prim. rel.*, N. Y., 1924, 44-46; oudah (Pigmy), R. R. Marett, 'Is taboo negative magic?', in *Anthrop. essays pres. to Tylor*; hasina (Malagasies), A. Van Gennep, *Tabou et totémisme à Madagascar*, Paris, 1904, 17-18, 186.

Tinh (Annamites), E. S. Hartland, *Ritual and belief*, London, 1914, 48; tsing (Chinese), J. J. M. de Groot, *Religious systems of China*, v. 4, bk. 2, 10; Vedic concept, J. E. Carpenter, l.c., 84.

Arungquitha (C. Australian), B. Spencer and F. J. Gillen, *Native tribes of central Australia*, London, 1899, 548-52, cf. 530-32, and *Northern tribes of central Australia*, London, 1904, 458; manngur's power (Kabi), J. Mathew, *Eaglehawk and Crow*, London, 1899, 143-44, 191; tondi (Batak, Sumatra), J. E. Carpenter, l.c., 84-85; mana (Melanesians), R. H. Codrington, *The Melanesians*, London, 1891, ch. xii, and pp. 118-21, 133.

<sup>3</sup> Fletcher, *Wakonda*, in BAE-B, 30, pt. ii, 897.

as the basis for comparison in order to furnish some degree of order for the analysis. The scrutiny of Melanesian mana revealed that it possessed nine characteristics: impersonal; supernatural; potential universality of possession; works for both good and evil; is all-pervading; possessed by persons, animals and things; is transferable; its failure is attributed to the intervention of a stronger spirit; and it may sometimes be secured by offerings.

b. *Comparison.* The writer then endeavored to weigh the concrete evidence for each of the mana-concepts regarding each of these characteristics. As space does not permit reproducing the evidence we shall merely indicate the results.

The examination showed the following:

1. Concepts which are *impersonal*: Mana, manito, maxpé, nahúrac power, nawalak, orenda, stlaw-la-kum (?), wakonda of the Omaha, yék, tung-ak, l'-âr, lunyênsu, mulungu, njomm, oudah, among the ancient Hindus, arungquiltha, manngur, hasina, and tondi. (20). As found among the Salish (sulia), Takelma, and "Siwash", the concept seems to be personal.

2. Concepts which are *supernatural*: mana, manito, maxpé, nahúrac, nawalak, orenda, sulia, wakonda of the Omaha, yék, in the concept as found among the Hudson Bay Eskimo, Takelma, and "Siwash", and in l'-âr, lunyênsu, mulungu, njomm, oudah, arungquiltha, hasina, and tondi. (20). The case of stlaw-la-kum and manngur have been left in doubt. There is no evidence for the Vedic.

3. Regarding *potential universality of possession*, we find:

(a) That mana, nawalak, orenda, sulia, wakonda of the Omaha, the concept among the Hudson Bay Eskimo, Takelma, and "Siwash", as well as lunyênsu, mulungu, njomm, arungquiltha, hasina, and tondi can be possessed by all. (14)

(b) That manito and yék can be possessed by a large majority. (2)

(c) That maxpé, nahúrac, stlaw-la-kum, l'-âr, and manngur are reserved for a chosen few. (5)

(d) That the oudah and Vedic data are inadequate. (2)

4. Regarding "*for good, for evil, or for both*", we find:

(a) Both good and evil: mana, nawalak, orenda, sulia, among the Hudson Bay Eskimo, and Takelma, as also mulungu, njomm, and manngur. (9).

(b) Good only: manito, maxpé, nahúrac, wakonda of the Omaha, yêk, among the "Siwash", as also l-'âr, lunyênsu, and hasina. (9)

(c) Evil only: Stlaw-la-kum, oudah, arungquiltha.

(d) Data inadequate: Vedic and tondi.

5. *All-pervading*: mana, manito, nahúrac, nawalak, orenda, sulia, wakonda of the Omaha, yêk, the concept among the Hudson Bay Eskimo, lunyênsu, njomm, arungquiltha, hasina, and tondi. (14).

Not all-pervading: stlaw-la-kum, l-'âr, mulungu, and manngur.

(4). A doubt exists in regard to maxpé, as well as in regard to the concept as found among the Takelma, "Siwash", and Vedic.

(4). The oudah data are inadequate.

6. Regarding *persons, animals, and things*, there are seven possible combinations:

(a) Persons only (7): Nahúrac, nawalak, sulia, l-'âr, mulungu, manngur, oudah (not definite).

(b) Animals only (0).

(c) Things only (1): Vedic (doubtful).

(d) Persons and animals only (0).

(e) Persons and things only (3): maxpé, arungquiltha, stlaw-la-kum (doubtful).

(f) Animals and things only (0).

(g) Persons, animals, and things (12): Mana, manito, orenda, wakonda of the Omaha, yêk, among the Hudson Bay Eskimo, Takelma, and "Siwash", lunyênsu, njomm, hasina, and tondi.

7. *Transferable*: Mana, manito, maxpé, orenda, the concept as found among the Hudson Bay Eskimo, l-'âr, arungquiltha, manngur, hasina, and tondi. (10). Not transferable: stlaw-la-kum, sulia, wakonda of the Omaha, and the concept as found among the Takelma. (4). Data inadequate: nahúrac, nawalak, yêk, "Siwash", lunyênsu, mulungu, njomm, oudah, and Vedic. (9).

8. *Reasons for failure*: Due to stronger power: mana, orenda, the concept among the Takelma, arungquiltha, and hasina. (5). No failure is considered for manito, nahúrac, wakonda of the Omaha, and oudah. (4). Data inadequate: maxpé, nawalak, sulia, stlaw-la-kum, yêk, Hudson Bay Eskimo, "Siwash", l-'âr, lunyênsu, mulungu, njomm, Vedic, manngur, tondi. (14).

9. *Offerings*: mana, orenda, sulia, among the Hudson Bay Eskimo, l-'âr, mulungu, njomm, and tondi. (8). Offerings not mentioned: manito, maxpé, nahúrac, nawalak, stlaw-la-kum,

wakonda of the Omaha, yĕk, among the Takelma, lunyĕnsu, arung-quiltha, manngur, and hasina. (12). Data inadequate: among the "Siwash" and Pigmies (oudah), and Vedic. (3).

c. *Characteristics which Melanesian Mana does not Possess.* In the course of this comparative study, certain characteristics appeared which Melanesian mana does not possess. We shall mention the principal of these, and the concepts in which they are found:

1. *Shaman.* The shaman is present, but has not exclusive use of the power among the Pawnee (nahúrac), Salish (sulia), Flat-heads (stlaw-la-kum), Hudson Bay Eskimo, Takelma, Arunta (arungquiltha). (6). The shaman seems to have almost exclusive control of the manngur power of the Kabi.

2. *Fasts.* Manito, sulia, wakonda of the Omaha, and the concept as found among the Hudson Bay Eskimo, place stress on fasting as a means necessary to obtain supernatural power. (4).

3. *Struggle of spirit with spirit.* Reported only among the Iroquois.

4. *The guardian spirit.* The Kwakiutl, Salish, Hudson Bay Eskimo, and "Siwash" concept of a guardian spirit is closely bound up with what we are considering as mana-concepts. (4).

#### IV. INTERPRETATION

The danger of making iron-clad divisions and then fitting the mana-concepts into them is obvious. The writer tried as much as possible to preserve objectivity throughout,—he had no theory to prove,—making the concepts "fit" if the evidence seemed to justify his doing so, but not hesitating to state that they fit "tightly", or not at all, or doubtfully, if such was the case. A second danger is that the writers from whom data have been secured may have mixed interpretation with fact. Then there is the danger of incorrect interpretation on the part of the present writer. Finally it is often very doubtful how far natives themselves have worked out and analyzed their own concepts; but this is no more surprising than the fact that we whites have not worked out a clear analysis of our own at least remotely kindred concept of "luck".

a. *The Primary, Secondary, and Marginal Characteristics.* These preliminary considerations suggest the difficulty of analyzing



such an elusive thing as the mana-concept. Our next step is to set up a standard by which a mana-concept can be recognized. The comparative study summarized above revealed that:

(1) Some of the characteristics are possessed by practically all the concepts; (2) no two concepts have exactly the same characteristics; (3) some few concepts possess characteristics which only a few others possess.

These three findings furnished a basis for the division into primary, secondary, and marginal characteristics. Judging from the above data we should say that the *primary* characteristics are: (a) Power; (b) supernatural; (c) impersonal; (d) works for good, or evil, or both. The *secondary* characteristics would be: (a) Potential universality of possession; (b) all-pervading; (c) persons, animals, and things. The *marginal* characteristics: (a) Transferable; (b) failure, due to a stronger power; (c) offerings; (d) shaman; (e) fasts; (f) combat of spirit with spirit; (g) guardian spirit.

b. *Final Elimination*: Using these criteria as a basis, the writer then subjected each of the concepts to examination, and if the concept lacked an important characteristic, or if it for any other reason was found wanting, it was eliminated. The minimum requirement for inclusion as a "true" mana-concept was taken to be possession of all the primary characteristics.

The first concepts eliminated were the Vedic and oudah, because of inadequate data. Six concepts were then eliminated because they lacked one or more primary characteristics: Stlaw-la-kum, manngur, sulia, Takelma, "Siwash", and tondi. The concepts that lacked one or more of the secondary characteristics were then examined, but only one of these, nahúrac, was eliminated. Of the concepts possessing both primary and secondary characteristics, only one was eliminated, nawalak. In the cases of nahúrac and nawalak, fuller information is needed.

Recapitulation of the final elimination showed: Concepts *eliminated*: Nahúrac, nawalak, sulia, stlaw-la-kum, Takelma, "Siwash", oudah, Vedic, manngur, and tondi. Those eliminated earlier in the study were: tinh, tsing, and hâi. (13). Concepts *retained* as "true" mana-concepts: mana, manito, maxpé, orenda, wakonda of the Omaha, yêk, Hudson Bay Eskimo (conditionally), l'-âr, lunyënsu, mulungu, arungquiltha, njomm, and hasina. (13).

## V. SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS

1. Empirical standards by which the "true" or "typical" mana-concept may be recognized have been set up.

2. A provisional list of the "true" mana-concepts has been suggested.

3. The mana-concept is not world-wide. In the present state of the evidence a theory of world-wide distribution of the mana-concept is untenable, because our study shows that, so far as evidence seems available, the true mana-concept is not present in Europe, South America, or Asia.

4. Origin. An examination of the culture level of the tribes in which the mana-concept as such has been found reveals that, of the thirteen tribes, seven are horticultural, four are higher hunters, one is pastoral, and one is a lower nomad tribe. From this we infer that the mana-concept was rather rare in early times. In general, then, our data tend to show that the mana-concept was probably not part of the earliest magico-religious culture of man.

5. The only characteristic which has been considered inconsistent with the true mana-concept is "life-giving".

6. Wakonda, since it is variously interpreted by various authors, might well be differentiated, as "of Fletcher", "of Dorsey", "of Radin", etc.

7. Investigation of "causes of failure" seems to have been overlooked in the past. Field workers would do well to collect data on this point.

8. A mana power that is 'natural' seems untenable.

9. Likewise, a mana power that is 'personal' seems untenable.

10. Ordinarily, a concept that possesses the primary characteristics may be considered a true mana-concept.

11. A concept lacking one or more of the secondary characteristics is ordinarily not for this reason alone to be eliminated.

12. When the guardian spirit is very closely bound up with supernatural power, there is apt to be doubt whether we then have the true mana-concept.

13. The study does not claim to be complete. An examination of other supposed mana-concepts must be made before final conclusions can be reached.

14. Radin's view that the Indians do not actually form a concept of personal and impersonal needs to be judged in the light of future investigation.

15. The fact that the term mana has frequently been used to denote all magical power is not sufficient ground for scrapping the term as connoting no specific content over and above the undifferentiated content of magical power as such.

16. Concepts which have here been eliminated are not thereby to be considered as finally or demonstrably excluded from the category of the true mana-concept. Future field investigation might bring out new evidence that would warrant their inclusion.

17. The tendency of late seems to be to use the term "mana" less loosely. Some had used it to designate vague supernatural or magical power; others had claimed that the concept is diffused all over the world. Our inference from the analysis of the facts is that mana means something more definite than "vague supernatural power"; and, as for "world-wide diffusion", it seems to us that the present state of the evidence does not warrant such a conclusion. If these two basic conclusions be justified by the evidence we have, a more restricted use of the term "mana" would be desirable.

### KAVA AND KAVA-DRINKING

REV. JOSEPH R. DEIHL, S.M.

Apia, Samoa

**'A**VA, Awa, or Kava, — Yanggona in Fiji, — is a plant indigenous to many of the islands of the Pacific Ocean and is used in the preparation of a drink known by the same names. It is a shrub with cordate, acuminate and many-nerved leaves. Its numerous stalks spring direct and separately from the root stock, attaining a height of six feet and often measuring two inches in diameter. The stalks are noduled much like bamboo. The root stock is the part used in the preparation of the drink, and is large, woody, and, when dried, of a light spongy appearance. The root takes from four to six years to attain such size and strength as render it suitable for kava-making, but becomes better and stronger with age.

The place of kava in botany was early fixed by Forster who called it a pepper, *Piper methysticum*, an intoxicating pepper. The chemical analysis made by Cuzent revealed in the root a volatile oil of a lemon-yellow color, a large amount of starch, a balsamic

resin [Lewinin perhaps], and an inactive crystalline substance, variously designated kavahenor, kavahin, yangonin, which are names simply fabricated from the native names of the plant.<sup>1</sup> As early as 1857, kava was suggested as a substitute for the two very unpleasant resins, copaiba and cubebs. It was official in the Indian and Colonial Addendum for the Australian Colonies. It is included in the British Pharmacopoeia, 1914, and also in *Squire's Companion*, 19th edition, 1916. As to its medical properties, it is a spinal rather than a cerebral depressant; it steadies the pulse, does not raise the temperature, and acts as a diuretic and stomachic tonic. Its chief medical use is in the cure of chronic cystitis and gleet and, amongst those South Sea Islanders affected with syphilis, its stimulating and diaphoretic action was highly appreciated.

Forster's classification may be in part answerable for the widespread belief that the kava drink is an alcoholic intoxicant. Churchill summarily dismisses such a notion as coming from "earnest but stupid men who had consecrated uniformly dull lives to the amelioration of the happy pagans of the island world", and who were "temperamentally unable to distinguish between liquor and intoxicating liquor." Cuzent, a naval pharmacist, writing especially for Tahiti, states that "intoxication," differing in kind from alcoholic intoxication, often resulted from the drinking of kava, an intoxication characterized by a profound torpor during which at the least noise the subject became irritated or even enraged. He gives us the method employed in the preparation: the green root was chewed, mixed with water and drunk at once, without leaving time for fermentation. A test made by Dr. Macgregor of Fiji, as related by Miss Cumming, showed that six ounces of kava, when chewed, increased in weight to seventeen.<sup>2</sup> Thus, by the action of the diastase of the saliva the starchy contents of the kava would be reduced to maltose and the further process of maceration would facilitate the fermentation.

Herman Melville refers to the narcotic influence of kava upon the natives of Typee Valley and their use of the drink principally as a stimulant. Mariner relates that the Tongans took food with

<sup>1</sup> G. H. Cuzent, *Iles de la Société: Tahiti*, Rochefort, 1860, 99.

<sup>2</sup> Wm. Churchill, *Samoan kava custom*, in *Holmes anniversary volume*, Wash., 1916, 56; Cuzent, l.c., 91-98; C. F. Cumming, *At home in Fiji*, Edinburgh, 1882, 51.

kava to prevent the nauseating feeling that would result otherwise, but stated that some addicts dispensed with this precaution. In Samoa the heavy kava-drinkers were accustomed to use again the same kava after leaving it to ferment for a day or two, and even to-day the polo, a small and very pungent pepper, is mixed with the drink to give it a strong burning taste. Ellis gives us his experience in the house of Miomioi a chief of Hawaii, who drank awa at his evening meal; "a man stood by his side with a calabash of fresh water, and the moment he [Miomioi] had swallowed the intoxicating dose, he seized the calabash, and drank a hearty draught of water, to remove the unpleasant taste and the burning effect of the awa".<sup>3</sup>

Pharmacologists recognize that kava is a spinal depressant,<sup>4</sup> and there is abundant authority to show that an excessive use of it, especially when the undried root has, through the process of chewing, been mixed with saliva in the preparation, leads most certainly to a loss of control over the muscles of the legs. One thus affected walks with a staggering gait, while the mind is clear. From his observation of these effects Forster may have been led to his classification, "Intoxicating Pepper" which many subsequent writers readily adopted.

It is to the point here to note that there are various species of kava, differing in strength. The Samoans distinguish at least three such,<sup>5</sup> and soil and climate, even in certain districts of Samoa, affect the relative strength. It is generally held that the kava plant in Hawaii is of a very strong type, while the Samoan kava is considered one of the mildest.

As regards the kava-drinking custom itself, Bishop Douceré tells us that in the New Hebrides kava-drinking is merely a means of enjoyment. Melville has nothing particular to tell us regarding kava ceremonies in the Marquesas, and Mr. Brigham is our authority for Hawaii that "awa drinking was neither so universal on

<sup>3</sup> H. Melville, *Typee*, repr., London, 1921, ch. xxi, 178; Wm. Mariner, *An account of the natives of the Tonga Islands*, 3rd ed., 2 vols., Edinburgh, 1827, ii, 151; Wm. Ellis, *Polynesian researches*, 4 vols., repr., N. Y., 1833, iv, 278.

<sup>4</sup> *Squire's Companion to the latest ed. of the British pharmacopeia*, 19th ed., 1916.

<sup>5</sup> Nine, according to A. Krämer, *Die Samoa-Inseln*, 2 vols., Stuttgart, 1902-3, ii, 459-60.

the Hawaiian Islands as on the southern groups, nor attended with so many ceremonies."<sup>6</sup>

Such, clearly, is not the case, however, among the Fijians and among the pure Polynesians of the central Pacific Islands. Churchill calls kava the "menstruum of manners, social solvent" which "occupies the most important place in the life of the Polynesian communities of the Pacific." "There is no public religious rite whatsoever," writes Mariner for Tonga, "and scarcely any in private, at which the ceremony of drinking cava does not form a usual and often a most important part." The Rev. Wm. Deane testifies for Fiji: "The root [kava] takes rank with the sacred *Soma* of India and the *Haoma* of Persia"; "the *Yanggóna* [kava] ceremony is one of the most intense of all Fijian functions." The words of Bishop Bataillon for Wallis Island apply with equal force and truth to the neighboring groups of Fiji, Tonga, and Samoa: "Kava is not only the ordinary drink with the Wallisians but with them it is elevated to the height of an institution."<sup>7</sup>

These citations suggest at once the traditions and ceremonies which would naturally become associated with a plant and the drink made therefrom which the native mind had come to regard almost as the sole necessity in his placating of the gods, in his reconciliation with enemies, in his winning and keeping the favor of kings and great chiefs. Kava served as a talisman to obtain health and to find things lost; it presided over all alliances, at all visits, at the least undertaking, religious or civil, public or personal.

We know that the plant is indigenous to the Pacific Islands. Guppy states, on the authority of the Rev. Mr. Lawes, that it grows wild in the forests of the South Coast of New Guinea, though its use is unknown to the natives. The Polynesian migrants, by chance or experiment early discovered the exhilarating character of kava and applied to it the descriptive adjective, a'ava, 'ava, kava, which in practically all Polynesian dialects signifies bitter, sour, acrid, sharp, or pungent.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>6</sup> V. Douceré, *Notes ethnologiques sur les populations indigènes des Nouvelles-Hébrides*, Lyon-Paris, 1924, 20; W. T. Brigham, *The ancient Hawaiian house*, Mem. Bishop mus., v. 2, no. 3, Honolulu, 1908, 144.

<sup>7</sup> Churchill, l. c., 53; Mariner, l. c., ii, 150; Wm. Deane, *Fijian society*, London, 1921, 76, 157; R. P. Mangeret, *Mgr. Bataillon et les missions de l'Océanie centrale*, Paris, 1884.

<sup>8</sup> H. B. Guppy, *The Solomon Islands and their natives*, London, 1887, 96-97; Churchill, l. c., 56.

Time almost completely wiped out the very memory of those first migrations; the natives of the various groups came to consider themselves as sprung from the soil; and the native habit of thought gradually led them to find an explanation for all things they saw and heard and thought. Among the divergent traditions in regard to the origin of kava there runs the common thread which associates kava with the gods and the demigod heroes who walked the world in the long ago. In one Samoan legend, Tagaloalagi, the god of the skies and the supreme god of the Samoans, held a secret colloquy with one of his sons, Taeatagaloa. Lefanoga, another son, while attempting to eavesdrop, was caught and was sent to fetch kava from the god's plantation. As Lefanoga was returning with his burden, it grew heavier and heavier, and he eventually slipped under the weight and fell through the heavens, still clinging to his kava root. He fell upon the island of Manu'a, one of the Samoan islands, where he planted the kava for the royal house of Manu'a.

Through the islands of the Pacific where kava was used, in particular through the central Pacific Islands, we find the drinking of kava and the accompanying ceremonies closely associated with the chiefs and royal personages. It was strictly forbidden to the commoners and to women, and in the ceremonies, a vigorous etiquette in the preparation and distribution was strictly adhered to, which designated, as no other ceremony could designate, the relative position and importance of the chiefs.

Thus, in the royal kava ceremony for the king of Manu'a, from ten to twenty separate bowls are prepared in the accepted manner, and a cup-bearer sits at each bowl. The kava cup is made from the shell of the coconut and is highly polished. A special cup is brought from the King's house, and the Virgin or *Taupou*, as this distinguished person is known in Samoa, receives into this cup a little kava from each separate bowl and thus presents it to the King. Afterwards, the other chiefs, according to the order of rank, are each presented with a drink, filled at once and indiscriminately from the various bowls. Here is clearly typified the overlordship of the King. Customs somewhat similar prevailed through the islands of Upolu and Savaii for the kings in these islands.

Chieftainship in Samoa is very complicated, but the kava dis-



tributor, no matter what the occasion may be, must know the ranking and the kava-names of these chiefs, for besides the ordinary title, each chief has a title which is used when kava is given to him. A mistake in such a matter would be a gross insult and, in the olden days, could have led quickly to bloodshed. Again, many chiefs have ceremonies particular to the title which they possess, the origin of which, in most cases, together with the explanation, have been lost in remote tradition. A chief's right of life and death over his subjects was shown by the destruction of anything or the killing of any animal or person that interfered in progress of the ceremony.

Mariner gives a full description of the Tongan kava-ceremony in which the king received his cup after his two councillors (*mata-pules*, eyes of the chief) had partaken; each chief in turn was then presented with the cup according to his ranking. We are indebted to Rátu Ravúlo, a prominent Fijian, for the very interesting account of the kava ceremony in connection with the installation of the high-chief, Vúniválu, of Mbau in the clan of Túikámbe, at Fiji. One notes the same concern lest the slightest detail of the ceremony go wrong, for such would augur serious evil. The ornaments worn by those who prepared the kava typified the solidity and stability of the government. The root must not be split lest there should arise divisions in the land. When the kava straining was finished, a priest stood beside the bowl with a cup in his two hands. The one who had strained off the kava particles took a second cup to use as a ladle, holding it likewise in his two hands, and ladled three times, pouring a small amount each time into the cup held by the priest. After each pouring the priest offered a dedicatory prayer, calling upon all the devils or original gods of the various lands. On the third occasion, the cup which had been used as ladle was turned right over, so as to be emptied completely, and was then allowed to fall between the arms of the priest, which typified that the whole government of the land was handed over. When the cup fell, they all made a supreme salutation, thus: "True it is that he stands above there". Still holding his cup with both hands, the priest approached the chief for whom the ceremony was made, and carefully poured the contents into the cup held by this chief in both hands also. After this the priest dropped his cup between the two arms of the chief, but caught it from below, lest



it should fall down,—which typified that the government had now been handed over and that no decision proceeding from the chief should fall to the ground or be neglected. When the chief in question had emptied his cup, the whole assembly joined in a hand-clapping, which signified that the decision in all councils concerning great matters of war and state came from him. From that day the chief was recognized as leader and was called by the name of the *Vūnivalu*.<sup>9</sup>

The explanation of the gifts made by the Samoan Parliament of chiefs to the Governor General of New Zealand in 1926 gives us an insight into the complexus of Samoan society and in particular reveals to us the true place of kava as a social institution. The Governor General was presented with a fine mat, a mat very special to Samoa and called "*ie toga*". The "*ie toga*" was the ancient symbol of the power and authority of the Samoan Government; it was the emblem of former kingships and the arbiter of peace and war. Secondly were presented the orator's staff and fly-whisk. The voice of the orator ruled in the great assemblies of the chiefs, and the staff and fly-whisk which every orator carried were the insignia of office. Thirdly were presented a kava bowl, cup and kava strainer, as representing an indispensable custom at all great ceremonial occasions. Authority was typified by the "*ie toga*"; deliberation and decision by the staff and fly-whisk; and the kava bowl, cup, and strainer typified the union of the two. Over the kava bowl the orator recognized the chief; the voice that deliberated and decided, honored and respected the voice of authority, and in a society thus strongly knit and cohesive, anarchy and chaos were avoided.

From what has been said, it is evident that the drinking of kava was not, at least in the central island groups of the Pacific, indulged in primarily for its intoxicating effects. It must not be inferred, however, that the drink was used solely on public occasions. As an appetizer, it was held in high esteem, and each chief usually regaled himself with kava before his meals. Some of them were even known as habitual drinkers.

With the advent of civilization, the natives have come to know of many of the concoctions of the white man, and these drinks have wrought havoc in many of the islands where kava was con-

<sup>9</sup> Mariner, I. c., ii, ch. 7; *Rātu Ravúlo* cited in Deane, I. c., 158-60.

sidered merely for its stimulating effects. But in the Central Groups of the Pacific, kava drinking holds its own. Many of the superstitions, if not all, have passed away, but the honored place of kava as the drink of the chiefs and the special ceremonies attending are retained to this day, so that it still may be called the "menstruum of manners, social solvent."

White men in these islands have readily taken to kava-drinking, for its thirst-quenching properties are unequaled. Though repugnant to many when taken for the first few times,—having a taste variously described as "resembling rhubarb and magnesia, flavoured with sal-volatile" according to Miss Cumming,<sup>10</sup> or as resembling "soapy-water" to others,—yet, the distinctly pleasant and refreshing feeling left in the mouth through the "numbing of the papillae at the tip of the tongue and a lesser degree of insensibility in the mucosa of the mouth cavity as far back as the fauces",<sup>11</sup> have raised the drink of kava to a public institution even among the European residents. Kava is on sale in most of the stores, and the refreshing cup is to be had wherever men congregate.

All kava-drinkers will agree with the Samoan bard, as the kava, ready for serving, sparkles in the bowl,—

"The liquor glitters like a mirror,  
It has the substance of turmeric in scented oil,  
It has the fragrance of Aglaia blooms,  
It diffuses an odor like gourds of oil scented with sandalwood  
two year old." <sup>12</sup>

### NAVAJO SPORTS

ALBERT B. REAGAN, PH.D.

Ouray, Utah

LIKE most Indians, the Navajos especially enjoy their sports and games. In the years ago they played a pole game and a three-stick dice game, the former being called Nahezshosh and the latter, Setdilth. They also played the Moccasin Game. But for some reason these became tabooed, and, instead, they now play

<sup>10</sup> Cumming, l. c., 61.

<sup>11</sup> Churchill, l. c., 57.

<sup>12</sup> Churchill, l. c., 62.

our games, such as football and baseball, and various card games. Below are their principal "native" sports, indulged in in our day.

#### THE HORSE RACE

They like to show off their horses, and each summer much time is spent in training for such an exhibition. A level spot in the sage-brush, a quarter to a half a mile in length, with a width of about fifty feet, is cleared, usually in an east-and-west line, straight as an arrow, for each community. Then on this every horse in same is practiced every afternoon and evening throughout the summer till in early fall. Then comes the final race, usually during some feast-dance occasion.

The contesting horses are lined up abreast at the west end of the race course, and at given signal the race is on. It is a spectacular affair and soon over. The assembled Navajos are the judges, though some head-man usually does the deciding. As soon as the winner is announced, there is much exchanging of property, immediately followed by bets for another race.

#### THE FOOT RACE

One of the great feats of the Indians is their foot race, and the Navajo is no exception. The contestants strip for the race, wearing only a breech-cloth. The race is often on the same course which has been prepared for the horse race, or they take it over the country from a certain designated spot to where the judges are stationed. If it is for only a short distance, say a quarter to a half a mile, they start at top speed as white people do in such races, but, if it is to be a race of miles, they start at a slow run which they continue to the goal. Their ability to run great distances is due to their "cantering" pace.

#### THE WRESTLING MATCH

Wrestling matches usually take place wherever there is a gathering of Navajos, such as at feasts, daytime dances, and other daylight gatherings. On these occasions the Navajos surround a central space, which might be termed the arena. Into this, one or more sets of contestants, of two men each, enter and walk about, as the two of each set spar for a strategic hold. Often they endeavor to seize each other by the hair of the head or by the thighs; but if both of these holds fail, they seize each other wherever they can.

They then wrestle, while those present often sing and dance or loudly talk and shout. The only dexterity they make use of is in the first seizing each other. After that it is all decided by main strength; and woe unto the clothing they wear, if they are not nude, for before the contest closes it will probably be torn to bits. Around the arena they wrench and twist each other till one or the other is thrown on his back. Should it happen, as it sometimes does, that neither can throw his antagonist, they part by mutual agreement, or are parted by others.

The writer will add that in all the matches of this sort which he has witnessed the whole was carried on with great good humor. Further, the conqueror never exulted over the conquered, neither did the defeated one ever repine at his ill luck.

#### THE CHICKEN PULL

The Navajo reaches his zenith in sport in the Chicken Pull or "Chicken Grappling," as some call the amusement.

On a feast-dance day when all the populace of the immediate country round about are assembled at one place, a designated person buries a rooster in some vantage spot so that its head just sticks above the dirt which he firmly packs around the body. He then usually addresses the motley croud, saying: "I have given you a rooster to start the chicken grappling. For the winner there is a prize of [say] thirty dollars. Now to the chase. Do your best. The bloodier you get the more fun it will be. Go to it."

All who care to enter this contest then strip off all their clothing except their pantaloons and proceed to ride at a gallop on saddleless horses past the imprisoned chicken. As they do so, each rider reaches over and grabs for its head. Faster and faster they ride back and forth and try their luck again and again. At last one of their number luckily leans far enough over and succeeds in getting the rooster by the neck, but his hold slips and he is crowded on by the next rider. The third rider following this one succeeds in yanking the fluttering fowl from his imprisonment.

Then the race begins in earnest. The holder of the chicken, spurring his horse to its greatest possible speed, rides here and there, closely pursued by the other riders, whom he beats and pounds with the squawking, fluttering chicken when they approach near him. Over hills and valleys, over rocks and gulches, alike, he is

chased. At last a pursuer gets hold of the chicken also; he seizes it by the leg. Then the two ride side by side and pull on the screaming, struggling bird for a considerable distance. They then turn their horses in opposite directions and, spurring them forward, pull and pull until they have torn the quivering body to pieces. Then over the hills they chase each other with the pieces till the bits are too small to race for. Then another rooster is buried and the same performance is acted out over again. And so on till the roosters in the immediate camps have been mutilated in the sport, and all the men are bloodier than a butcher in a slaughter house.

### SEVENTH ANNUAL MEETING OF THE CONFERENCE

THE Seventh Annual Meeting of the Catholic Anthropological Conference was held on March 29th, 1932, at The Catholic University of America, Washington, D. C. The morning and afternoon sessions were presided over by the president, the Very Rev. Dr. Michael A. Mathis, C.S.C.

The following officers were elected: Honorary President, Rt. Rev. Msgr. James H. Ryan; President, Very Rev. Michael A. Mathis, C.S.C.; Vice-President, Rev. Leopold J. Tibesar, A.F.M.; Secretary-Treasurer, Rev. John M. Cooper; Executive Board: Rev. Berard Haile, O.F.M., Rev. Joseph Meier, M.S.C., Rev. Morice Vanoverbergh, C.I.C.M., to 1933; Rev. Albert Muntsch, S.J., Rev. Adolph Frenay, O.P., Rev. Dr. Maurice Sheehy, to 1934; Rev. Marcellinus Molz, S.D.S., Rev. Richard Pittini, S.C., Rev. Gregory Schramm, O.S.B., to 1935.

The following papers were read: The Position of Woman in Samoan Culture, by Rev. Joseph Deihl, S.M.; The Woman of India at Home, by Dr. Anna Dengel, Catholic Medical Missionaries; The Changing Outlook of the Women of India, Mr. George E. Noronha, The Bengalese; The Position of Woman among the Mescalero Apache, Miss Regina Flannery, The Catholic University of America; The Position of Woman among the Iroquois, Mr. J. N. B. Hewitt, Smithsonian Institution; The Position of Woman in Primitive Culture, Rev. John M. Cooper, The Catholic University of America.

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